

# The Alexander Legend in Byzantium: Some Literary Gleanings

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The enduring popularity in Byzantium of the late antique Alexander romance is impressively demonstrated by the richness and diversity of its textual tradition. The oldest, so-called  $\alpha$ -recension of the Greek text is preserved in a well-known eleventh-century Byzantine manuscript;<sup>1</sup> several later recensions date clearly from the Byzantine period proper, and there are demotic versions in prose and verse from medieval and early modern times.<sup>2</sup> The numerous allusions to and quotations from the Alexander romance in Byzantine literature have not yet been systematically collected and analyzed;<sup>3</sup> this paper is offered to show the inherent interest of this indirect tradition and its value in reconstructing the multifaceted Byzantine image of Alexander.

The first example comes from the apocryphal version<sup>4</sup> of the letter of the three Oriental patri-

archs to Emperor Theophilus;<sup>5</sup> like the original *ad Theophilum* itself,<sup>6</sup> this version (henceforth designated "pseudo-*ad Theophilum*") is most probably a Byzantine product, though it is (anachronistically) attributed to John of Damascus.<sup>7</sup> It may date from the years immediately following the restoration of image worship,<sup>8</sup> and in any case is prior to and in fact one of the sources of the chronicle of Georgius Monachus.<sup>9</sup> As has already been discovered by F. Pfister and U. Riedinger, the pseudo-*ad Theophilum* at one point quotes (firsthand?) from the Alexander romance.<sup>10</sup> The nocturnal meeting of Em-

<sup>1</sup>Par. gr. 1711 (siglum A); this ms. is, inter alia, also the unique witness for the chronicle of the *Scriptor incertus de Leone Armenio*; for a new description, see A. A. Mosshammer, *Georgii Syncelli Ecloga Chronographica* (Leipzig, 1984), viii-ix. The attribution of the Alexander romance to Callisthenes (still absent in A) is of late Byzantine origin; it is attested first in the 12th-century author Johannes Tzetzes (Chil. I, Hist. 13, ed. P. A. M. Leone, *Joannis Tzetzae Historiae* [Naples, 1968], 15, line 331) and in several 14th-15th century mss. of the  $\beta$ -recension.

<sup>2</sup>For a quick orientation, see H.-G. Beck, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Volksliteratur* (Munich, 1971), 31 ff, 133 ff, and more specifically R. Merkelbach and J. Trumpf, *Die Quellen des griechischen Alexanderromans*, 2nd ed (Munich, 1977), 93 ff; J. Trumpf, "Zur Überlieferung des mittelgriechischen Prosa-Alexander und der *Φυλλάδα του Μεγαλέξαντρου*," *BZ* 60 (1967), 3 ff; K. Mitsakis, "The Tradition of the Alexander Romance in Modern Greek Literature," in *Ancient Macedonia*, ed. B. Laourdas and Ch. Makaronas (Thessaloniki, 1970), 376 ff; D. Holton, *The Tale of Alexander: The Rhymed Version* (Thessaloniki, 1974), 3 ff and more generally G. Veloudis, *Alexander der Große: Ein alter Neugriecher* (Munich, 1969), esp. 16 ff.

<sup>3</sup>But see F. Pfister, "Alexander der Große in der byzantinischen Literatur und in neugriechischen Volksbüchern," in *Probleme der neugriechischen Literatur*, III, BBA 16 (Berlin, 1960), 112 ff, and H. J. Gleixner, *Das Alexanderbild der Byzantiner*, diss. (Munich, 1961), esp. 32 ff and 100 ff ("Nachwirkungen des Alexanderromans").

<sup>4</sup>PG 95, cols. 345 ff.

<sup>5</sup>The original version was edited from two mss. by J. Sakellion, *Ἐκ τῶν ἀνεκδότων τῆς πατριαρχικῆς βιβλιοθήκης, Εὐαγγελικὸς Κήρυξ* 8 (1864), 97 ff, repr. by L. Duchesne, "L'Iconographie byzantine dans un document grec du IX<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Roma e l'Oriente* 5 (1912-13), 222 ff, 273 ff, 349 ff. The ms. tradition goes back in part to the 9th century; see F. Halkin, "Les différentes éditions de la synodique à l'empereur Théophile," *AnalBoll* 76 (1958), 64; W. Lackner, "Ein Nachtrag zum Katalog der griechischen Handschriften zu Tirana," *JÖB* 20 (1971), 246-47; and M. Aubineau, "Le cod. Dublin, Trinity Coll. 185: Textes de Christophe d'Alexandrie, d'Ephrem et de Chrysostome," *Le Muséon* 88 (1976), 114 ff.

<sup>6</sup>See I. Ševčenko, "Constantinople Viewed from the Eastern Provinces in the Middle Byzantine Period," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 3-4 (1979-80), 375 note 36, and R. Cormack, *Writing in Gold: Byzantine Society and Icons* (London, 1985), 261.

<sup>7</sup>In Par. gr. 1335, fol. 203v, lines 4 ff, the title is τοῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰωάννου τοῦ Δαμασκηνοῦ ἐπιστολὴ πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα Θεόφιλον.

<sup>8</sup>One common source of the pseudo-*ad Theophilum* and of its model is the καθαίρεσις καὶ ἀναθεματισμὸς τῶν αἰρεσιάρχων ψευδωνύμων πατριάρχων, Θεοδότου, Ἀντωνίου, Ἰωάννου (unedited; Patmiensis 48, fols. 411r-413v). See J. A. Munitiz, "An Alternative Ending to the Letter of the Three Patriarchs (BHG 1386)," *OCP* 55 (1989), 416, and B. Hemmerdinger, "Les sources de BHG 1387 (PG 95, 345-85)," *OCP* 34 (1968), 146.

<sup>9</sup>See S. Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm during the Reign of Leo III, with Particular Attention to the Oriental Sources* (Louvain, 1973), 71-72. A recent study of A. Markopoulos (Συμβολὴ στὴ χρονολόγησι τοῦ Γεωργίου Μοναχοῦ, Σύμμεικτα 6 [1985], 223 ff) concludes that the chronicle was written sometime (soon?) after 871.

<sup>10</sup>F. Pfister and U. Riedinger, "Ein Zitat aus dem Alexanderroman des Ps.-Kallisthenes in einer untergeschobenen Schrift des Johannes von Damaskos," *BZ* 48 (1955), 86-88.

peror Leo V and the iconoclastic hermit Sabbatius is explicitly compared to Alexander's encounter in Ethiopia with the god Serapis and the deified pharaoh Sesonchosis; the verbatim citation belongs to the  $\alpha$ -recension of Pseudo-Callisthenes and in fact supplies, in several instances, welcome emendations to the defective text of the one extant Greek manuscript.<sup>11</sup> But does the comparison with Alexander serve any purpose other than to demonstrate the author's admirable classical learning? One can, of course, hardly suppose that he would want to depict Leo, the iconoclastic heretic, as a kind of Alexander redivivus, a new savior of Hellas; unlike Sabbatius, who predicted to Leo and his son Constantine a reign of some thirty-two years,<sup>12</sup> Serapis warns the inquisitive Alexander that a mortal should not be curious about his appointed term of life. The intended implication is that the barbarous Iconoclasts were woefully ignorant of the moral lessons inculcated by the wisdom of antiquity.

<sup>11</sup>The quotation in question (PG 95, cols. 369A–C) corresponds to Pseudo-Callisthenes, III.24, ed. G. Kroll, *Historia Alexandri Magni* (Pseudo-Callisthenes), I, *Recensio vetusta* (Berlin, 1926), 123, lines 9 ff. The evidence from the pseudo-*ad Theophilum* was utilized in the new edition of the Pseudo-Callisthenes text of the episode by Merkelbach and Trumpf, *Quellen*, 215–18 (“Alexanders Besuch in der äthiopischen Götterhöhle”): this latter is based, however, only on the occasionally inaccurate edition from Par. gr. 1335 in PG 95; my own collation of the text in the Parisinus reinforces its clear affinity to the  $\alpha$ -type Pseudo-Callisthenes text in A (Par. gr. 1711). Thus Par. gr. 1335 throughout has the spelling Σάραπισ (Σέραπισ in PG 95) and the first question of Alexander to Sesonchosis is πῶ κύρι, as is the case in A (ed. Kroll, p. 123, line 11 note; corrected (*recte* ?) by Kroll to οὐ, κύριε). Furthermore, all of the noted variants from Marc. gr. 575 (as communicated by B. Kotter apud Pfister and Riedinger, “Ein Zitat aus dem Alexanderroman,” 87) are found in Par. gr. 1335; the Marcianus, in fact, may be derived from the Paris ms. See W. Lackner, “Ein byzantinisches Marienmirakel,” *Byzantinica* 13.2 (1985), 836–37.

<sup>12</sup>The account of Sabbatius in this text differs from that given in the 10th-century chronicles; thus, according to the chronicle of Genesius, the hermit Sabbatius resided in Philomelium in Asia Minor, not in Thracian Selymbria, as in our text, and he sent his message in the form of a letter to the emperor; then Leo had a secret rendezvous in the capital with a second, unnamed monk, who, suborned by the future patriarch Theodotus Melissenus (an individual not even mentioned in the pseudo-*ad Theophilum*), fraudulently promised Leo that he would reign until his 72nd year (*Regum libri quattuor*, ed. A. Lesmüller-Werner and H. Thurn [Berlin-New York, 1978] 10, lines 20 ff.). Basil, an official in charge of naval supplies (χαρτουλάριος τῆς λεγομένης ἐξαρχίσεως), who, according to the pseudo-*ad Theophilum*, was Leo's emissary to Sabbatius (PG 95, col. 368D), is not noted in Genesius. The account in Theophanes Continuatus (Bonn ed. [1838], 26, lines 9 ff.) is substantially the same as that of Genesius. This version, given by these chronicles, may also go back to the early 9th century; at any rate, in conclusion the remark is made that Theophanes Confessor supposedly wrote a polemical account in verse of these events (Genesius, 11, lines 58–59).

One should note another related use of material from the Alexander romance at an earlier point in the pseudo-*ad Theophilum*. This was overlooked by Pfister and Riedinger, presumably because Alexander is not mentioned by name in the passage. The end of the peaceful reign of the pious emperors Michael I and his son Theophylact is heralded by an ill omen: the birth of a truly monstrous child, human in shape to the navel, but with lower extremities in the shape of wild animals:

τέρας ξενοφανὲς εἶδέν ἐν τὴν πανευδαίμονα πόλιν· γυναικὸς τινος τῶν ἐγχωρίων τετοκυίας βρέφος, τὰ μὲν ἄνω μέλη τοῦ σώματος ἕως τοῦ ὀμφαλοῦ εἶχε πάντα παιδός, τὰ δὲ ὑποκάτω θηρίων ἀγρίων καὶ παρδάλεων καὶ λύκων. καὶ τούτων μὲν ἦσαν αἱ μορφαὶ κινούμεναι, ὥστε γινώσκειν ἐκάστου τὸν σχηματισμόν.<sup>13</sup>

This is again, as a quick comparison shows, a somewhat shortened but nonetheless direct citation from the  $\alpha$ -recension of the Alexander romance. At the time of his final sojourn in Babylon, Alexander is confronted with this ominous child, described as a Scylla-like monster:

τῶν γὰρ ἐγχωρίων γυναικῶν <τις> ἔτεκε βρέφος, <δ>τὰ μὲν ἄνω μέλη τοῦ σώματος ἕως τοῦ ὀμφαλοῦ εἶχε πάντα παιδός, τὰ δὲ ὑποκάτω θηρίων ἀγρίων προτομαῖς ἐστεφανωμένα, ὥστε εἶναι ὅλον τὸν τύπον τῇ γραφομένῃ Σκύλλῃ παραπλήσιον, εἰ μὴ τῇ τῶν θηρίων ἁλλοιώσει καὶ τῷ πλήθει διήλαττεν. <ἦσαν γὰρ αἱ προτομαῖ> λεόντων καὶ παρδάλεων καὶ λύκων. καὶ τούτων μὲν ἦσαν μορφαὶ κινούμεναι καὶ εὐδηλοὶ πᾶσιν.<sup>14</sup>

Alexander then summons Chaldaean soothsayers, who interpret the monstrous birth as a portent of the anarchy that will prevail after his death.<sup>15</sup> In the pseudo-*ad Theophilum* this kind of political prophecy *ex eventu* is not made, though it could

<sup>13</sup>Par. gr. 1335, fol. 208v = PG 95, col. 365D.

<sup>14</sup>Ps.-Callisthenes, III. 30, 2–3, ed. Kroll, 131, lines 9–14. In Par. gr. 1711 there is clearly a gap after εὐδηλοὶ in the closing phrase; the correct reading is preserved in the  $\beta$ -recension (πᾶσιν εὐδηλοὶ ὥστε γινώσκειν τὸν ἐκάστου τύπον, ed. L. Bergson, *Der griechische Alexanderroman, Rezension*  $\beta$  [Stockholm, 1965], 180, line 8); this is also the wording in the pseudo-*ad Theophilum*, with the secondary substitution of σχηματισμόν for τύπον and the excision of the pleonastic εὐδηλοὶ πᾶσιν.

<sup>15</sup>Ed. Kroll, 132, lines 190 ff. The episode is also found in a short Latin text called *De morte testamentoque Alexandri Magni liber*, part of the no longer extant Metz codex, Mettens. 500 (ed. P. H. Thomas, *Incerti auctoris epitoma rerum gestarum Alexandri Magni cum libro de morte testamentoque Alexandri* [Leipzig, 1960], 32, lines 3 ff and ed. Merkelbach and Trumpf, *Quellen*, p. 254, lines 6 ff.). The narrative has been interpreted as reflecting a pamphlet of the early 4th century B.C.: Merkelbach and Trumpf, *Quellen*, 161 ff, but see now J. Seibert, “Das Testament Alexanders, ein Pamphlet aus der Frühzeit der Diadochenkämpfe?” in *Land und Reich. Stamm und Nation . . . Festgabe für Max Spindler zum 90. Geburtstag*, ed. A. Kraus, vol. I (Munich,

easily have been put on the lips of someone like Patriarch Nicephorus, who had been credited with clairvoyance.<sup>16</sup> In a general way, to be sure, the omen of the monstrous birth, transposed in a bold fashion from Alexander's times to medieval Constantinople, is presented as a premonition of the bestial Leo V's reign of terror.<sup>17</sup> But then, in a somewhat abrupt manner and with no link to the monster child and its rustic mother from the Alexander legend, the figure of another prophetess is introduced; possessed by the mantic spirit, she predicts to the pious Michael the impending change of rulers.<sup>18</sup> The emperor attempts to keep the matter quiet, but the dangerous secret of the identity of his successor (Leo)<sup>19</sup> leaks out and is used by the future heresiarch John the Grammarian for his own advancement. (This part of the story, with some significant differences, is also known from later chronicles.)<sup>20</sup> Leo, while still strategos of the Anatolic theme, learns through an otherwise unknown courtier, Nicephorus,<sup>21</sup> about the utterances of the prophetess and the similar

predictions of a wandering monk.<sup>22</sup> This monk is to be distinguished from the hermit Sabbatius with whom, according to this text, Leo comes into contact only *after* his accession to the throne.

A different example of the creative appropriation of material from the Alexander romance is found in an earlier hagiographical narrative, the Vita of Macarius Romanus.<sup>23</sup> The work, on the basis of some admittedly slender indices, can be dated approximately to the sixth or early seventh century.<sup>24</sup> The designation βίος καὶ πολιτεία is somewhat misleading;<sup>25</sup> though the text does in-

1984), 247 ff. Merkelbach's suggestion that in the famous 11th-century Otranto mosaic the monster birth is shown as a pendant to Alexander's ascension (*Quellen*, 170 note 19) lacks cogency; the mosaic depicts an (admittedly very puzzling) monster with four leonine bodies and one (leonine?) head, resting on a wolf, which in turn is in the process of devouring a serpent—all details hardly congruent with the description of the half-human monster of the Alexander legend. Merkelbach discusses the problem again at some length in a more recent article ("Alexander und der vierleibige Löwe im Dom zu Otranto," *ZPapEpig* 38 [1980], 255–58), but his rather cavalier dismissal of the importance of precise iconographic details (p. 257) does not resolve the matter. For reproductions of the pertinent part of the mosaic and a very tentative discussion of some iconographic parallels, see C. Settis-Frugoni, "Per una lettura del mosaico pavimentale della cattedrale di Otranto," *BISI* 80 (1968), 226 and fig. 2, and idem, "Il mosaico di Otranto: Modelli culturali e scelte iconografiche," *BISI* 82 (1970), 267–68 and fig. 6.

<sup>16</sup> See, e.g., Genesius, 12, lines 62 ff.

<sup>17</sup> . . . πάλιν ἡμῖν φερώνυμος τῆς δυσσεβείας θῆρ, ὡς λέων ἀρπάξων καὶ ὠρυόμενος ἐνέσκειπεν (PG 95, col. 365c).

<sup>18</sup> . . . ἀλλὰ γε ἑαυτῇ ἡ ἐγγαστρίμυθος ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐν αὐτῇ προσφωνούντος πνεύματος Πύθωνος ἀναερίου, τὴν τῶν βασιλέων ταχείαν ἀναδοχὴν τερατεύεται (PG 95, cols. 365d–368a). The word ἀναδοχή, in the sense of "succession," seems to be peculiar to this text; it should perhaps be corrected to διαδοχή.

<sup>19</sup> Λέων δὲ ἔσται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, ἐξ Ἀρμενίων ἀγχιστείας καταγόμενος (PG 95, col. 368b).

<sup>20</sup> Theophanes Cont., Bonn ed., 22, lines 2 ff; Genesius, ed. Lesmüller-Wiener and Thurn, 8, lines 59 ff; Pseudo-Symeon, Bonn ed., 605, lines 7 ff; the courtier who manipulated the knowledge to his advantage in this tradition is Theodotus Melissenus, alias Cassiteras, not John the Grammarian.

<sup>21</sup> Νικηφόρος τις ὁ παρωνύμιος Κιννάριος λεγόμενος (PG 95, col. 368b). The non-iconic seal of this individual is extant; see W. Seibt, "Über das Verhältnis von κινάριος bzw. δομέστικος τῆς τραπεζῆς zu den anderen Funktionären der βασιλική τράπεζα in mittelbyzantinischer Zeit," *BZ* 72 (1959), 36. Seibt notes

the Nicephorus of the pseudo-*ad Theophilum*, but erroneously makes him a century older and an associate of Leo III; so also in his later article "Κινάριος—ein 'neuer' Würdenträger am Hof des byzantinischen Kaisers," *Handes Amsorya* 88 (1974), col. 371.

<sup>22</sup> . . . ἄλλος δὲ τις τῶν κυκλαρίων ψευδεργιμῶν (col. 368 bc). The designation κυκλάριος ("vagabond") is again peculiar to this text; it is clearly synonymous with the better attested κυκλευτής.

<sup>23</sup> BHG 1004-S; Athanasius Vassiliev, ed., *Anecdota graeco-byzantina, pars prior* (Moscow, 1893), 135 ff from two mss: Mosq. 3 (saec. XIII/XIV) and Mosq. 351 (saec. XV) in two parallel columns. Unless otherwise indicated, reference is to the wording of the older ms. Alexander Kazhdan has adduced this text to illustrate the sort of fantastic notions many Byzantines entertained about India ("Where, When and by Whom Was the Greek Barlaam and Joasaph Not Written," in *Zu Alexander d.Gr. Festschrift G. Wirth zum 60. Geburtstag am 9.12.86*, ed. W. Will and J. Heinrichs, vol. II [Amsterdam, 1988], 1187).

<sup>24</sup> They visit a Persian locality called Ἀσία, where St. Mercurius miraculously slew Julian the Apostate (ed. Vassiliev, 137, lines 9 ff); the name of Mercurius only appears in the second version (ed. Vassiliev, 137, line 10). Is the first version of the text earlier than the eventual identification of Julian's supernatural murderer as Mercurius of Caesarea? The topographical detail in question is first attested in the 6th-century chronicle of Malalas (Bonn ed., 327, line 21), though there it professedly depends on the testimony of Eutychianus, a 4th-century eyewitness historian of Julian's last campaign; in fact, the account is most probably of later, Syrian origin (see Th. Büttner-Wobst, "Der Tod des Kaisers Julians," *Philologus* 51 [1892], 564 note 8). Only the Sasanian capital Ctesiphon is noted in the Vita, and there is no sign of any knowledge of the Muslim dominion in the East. As Vassiliev already noted (*Anecdota*, xxxviii), it is telling that only in the later Latin translation is the mention of Saracens to be found; Macarius' simple question in the Greek about the origin of his guests is expanded, inter alia, with the pathetic query "si Sarraceni vel ethnici hactenus Christi populo persecutionem ingerunt" (PL 73, col. 421b). The Vita dates at the very latest from the 10th century; the oldest ms. (Vat. gr. 824) dates from the 11th century, and the Georgian version belongs to the pre-Metaphrastic *keimena*-redaction (see M. Tarchnišvili, *Geschichte der kirchlichen georgischen Literatur* [Vatican City, 1955], 484). The Armenian version (see BHO 580; text not available to me) may throw further light on the question of dating.

<sup>25</sup> In the usual printed synaxarium entry the first part of the narrative is indeed abbreviated drastically, and Macarius' own account of his life has pride of place (see, e.g., Nicodemus the Hagiorite, *Συναξαριστής τῶν δώδεκα μηνῶν τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ*, 5th ed., I [Thessaloniki, 1981], 409 ff; cf. *Synaxarium CP*, 160, lines 36 ff.

clude an autobiographical account of the hermit Macarius, it is, for the most part, a description of the travels of three monks from Mesopotamia. These monks, the narrator Theophilus and his companions Sergius and Hyginus, are obsessed with the rather profane desire to explore the limits of the earth, to see whether the sky is indeed supported on an iron pillar.<sup>26</sup> They unceremoniously leave their monastery without the permission of their superior, Asclepius.<sup>27</sup> The first stage of their travels is a rather banal pilgrimage to the Holy Land, but then they continue their journey to Persia, India, and points even farther east. In the course of their adventures, they encounter all sorts of exotic beasts and monstrous half-human beings, but manage to escape unscathed. Then our travelers, guided by a dove, come upon an arch that had been built by Alexander. The inscription on its vault tells them that it was erected when Alexander was pursuing his Persian foe.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the inscription continues, he who would enter the land of darkness must keep to the left; the waters have their origin on the left, and, following the sound of the waters, one will finally emerge into daylight.<sup>29</sup> By contrast, if one keeps to the right, one will find only mountains, cliffs, and a snake-filled lake.<sup>30</sup> The monks, of course, follow these directions and then encounter the hermit Macarius and two lions, his constant companions. Macarius welcomes them as fellow Christians, tells them his life story, and convinces them to turn back; he, Macarius, had attempted the same journey, but it was revealed to him that the way is barred to mortals by walls of iron and brass and by angels who guard the earthly paradise; the sky indeed comes to an end east of this paradise.<sup>31</sup> Our

<sup>26</sup> ἡθέλον . . . τὰ ἔτη τῆς ζωῆς μου περιπατεῖν ἕως οὗ ἴδω ποῦ ἀναπέπνται ὁ οὐρανός, ἐπειδὴ λέγουσιν ὅτι ἐπὶ στυλοῦ σιδήρου ἀναπέπνται (ed. Vassiliev, 135, lines 28 ff).

<sup>27</sup> One ms. (Vat. gr. 2606) makes the precise identification as μοναστήριον τοῦ ἁγίου Ἀνδρέου (see J. Trumpp, "Zwei Handschriften einer Kurzfassung der griechischen Vita Macarii Romani," *Anal Boll* 88 [1970], 25).

<sup>28</sup> . . . εὗρομεν ἀψίδα καὶ ἐγράφεον εἰς τὸ κύκλος αὐτῆς οὕτως: Ταύτην τὴν ἀψίδα ἡγεῖρεν Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ τῶν Μακεδόνων βασιλεὺς καταδιώκων ἀπὸ Καρχηδόνας ὡς θηρίον [variant Δαρεῖον] τὸν Πέρσην ἕως ἐνταῦθα (ed. Vassiliev, 142, lines 7 ff).

<sup>29</sup> . . . ταῦτά εἰσιν τὰ σκοτεινὰ ἃ διήλθεν. ὁ θέλων ἐνδότερον εἰσελθεῖν πάντα ἀριστερὰ περιπατεῖτω, πάντα γὰρ τὰ ὕδατα τοῦ κόσμου ἐκ τοῦ ἀριστεροῦ μέρους ἐκπορεύονται. ὁ διερχόμενος τῇ φωνῇ τῶν ὑδάτων ἀκολουθεῖτω καὶ ἐξελεύσεται εἰς φῶς (ed. Vassiliev, 142, lines 12 ff).

<sup>30</sup> . . . τὰ δεξιὰ μέρη ὁρη εἰσι πάντα καὶ κρημνοὶ καὶ λίμνη παμμεγέθης ὅφεν μεμεστωμένη (ed. Vassiliev, 142, lines 20 ff). The second version adds scorpions for good measure.

<sup>31</sup> . . . ὡς ἀπὸ μύλων εἰκοσι τῶν ὧδε ἔστιν τὸ τεῖχος σιδηροῦν καὶ ἕτερον χαλκοῦν καὶ ἔσωθεν τούτων ἔστιν ὁ παράδεισος ὅπου ἦν ποτὲ Ἀδάμ καὶ ἡ Εὐά, καὶ ἄνωθεν τοῦ παραδείσου

travelers take leave of Macarius, retrace their steps through the land of darkness, accompanied by the two lions until they reach the arch of Alexander; they eventually return to their monastery and their long-suffering abbot, Asclepius.

The episode regarding Alexander's arch is part of the Alexander romance tradition, though it is found neither in the α-recension nor in the vulgate form of the β-recension. It appears in the ε-recension, which dates at the earliest from the late seventh century;<sup>32</sup> the inscription (in dodecasyllabic verse) is of a more general nature and does not specify the direction the traveler should take.<sup>33</sup> An account of Alexander's arch is also part of a later, expanded form of the β-recension, henceforth designated as the "L-version," represented in particular by *Leidensis Vulc.* 93 (siglum L),<sup>34</sup> *Bodl. misc.* 283 (siglum P),<sup>35</sup> as well as several manuscripts of the related recension λ,<sup>36</sup> and one aber-

κατὰ ἀνατολὰς ὁ οὐρανὸς ἀναπέπνται (ed. Vassiliev, 152, lines 18 ff). The original query of the monks (see above, note 26) is hereby answered.

<sup>32</sup> See Merkelbach and Trumpp, *Quellen*, 96, 206. The connection of this detail of the Vita with the Alexander romance was noted, in a general way, by F. Pfister ("Episoden des Alexanderromans in christlichen Texten," *ThLz* 37 [1912], 572; "Studien zur Sagengeographie," *SOs* 35 [1959], 20–21); see also Merkelbach and Trumpp, *Quellen*, 135.

<sup>33</sup> . . . ἐκεῖσε Ἀλέξανδρος ἡγεῖρε ἀψίδα, γεφυρώσας αὐτὴν [sc. τὴν φάραγγα]. ἐν δὲ τῇ ἀψίδι γράμματα Ἑλληνικά, Περσικά καὶ Αἰγυπτιακά. ἡ δὲ γραφὴ τάδε δηγόρευσεν. Ἐνθαδ' Ἀλέξανδρος ἡγεῖρε ἀψίδα, / ἐν ἣ παντοκρατὶ διαβάς ὑπεράνω / τὴνδ' ἐκπερὰ φάραγγα, ἄκρον θέλων γαίης / καταλαβεῖν, ὡς τῇ προνοίᾳ δόξειεν (ed. J. Trumpp, *Anonymi Byzantini Vita Alexandri Regis Macedonum* [Stuttgart, 1974], p. 113, line 11 – p. 114, line 6). That one desirous to behold wonders should travel to the right is, however, the advice to Alexander of the birds with human form and voice: ὅς τὴν ἐπὶ δεξιᾷ ἀνθυποστρέψειεν ὁδόν, θαυμάσια ὄψεται (ed. Trumpp, 117, lines 8–9). According to a later medieval reworking of the ε-recension Alexander wrote on the arch with γράμματα ῥωμαϊκά καὶ ἀράβικα the following: Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ βασιλεὺς εἰς τὴν ἄκραν τῆς γῆς ἦλθεν καὶ ἀπὸ τὴν καμάραν ἐτούτην ἐδιάβηκα με τὰ φουσάτα μου ὅλα (ed. V. L. Konstantinopoulos, *Ps.-Kallisthenes: Zwei mittelgriechische Prosa-Fassungen des Alexanderromans*, Teil II [Königstein/Ts., 1983], 50, lines 10 ff).

<sup>34</sup> H. Meusel, ed., "Pseudo-Callisthenes nach der Leidener Handschrift herausgegeben," *Jahrbücher für classische Philologie* 5th suppl. (Leipzig, 1864–72), 701 ff and H. van Thiel, ed. and trans., *Leben und Taten Alexanders von Makedonien: Der griechische Alexanderroman nach der Handschrift L* (Darmstadt, 1974), 2 ff. It should be noted that the latter editor somewhat arbitrarily replaced the α-type text of I, 1–10 in L with the β-text from another ms. (Vat. gr. 1556, siglum V); for details, see xlii. This unusual piece of philological restoration work was overlooked by K. Dowden in his English translation of van Thiel's edition of L apud B. P. Reardon, ed., *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* (Berkeley, 1989), 650 ff. The portion of the text that is of interest is also re-edited by Bergson, *Rezension β*, 193 ff.

<sup>35</sup> See Bergson, *Rezension β*, xix–xx.

<sup>36</sup> See Merkelbach and Trumpp, *Quellen*, 203 ff and H. van Thiel, *Die Rezension λ des Pseudo-Kallisthenes* (Bonn, 1959), esp.

rant manuscript of recension  $\gamma$  (Par. gr. suppl. gr. 113, siglum C).<sup>37</sup> This L-version provides a formulation closely related to our hagiographical text; however, the connection does not take the form of simple borrowing. According to this version, after the famous episode concerning the cook Andreas and the fountain of life, Alexander erected an arch on which was engraved a short inscription to the effect that those who would enter the land of the blessed should go to the right, lest they perish.<sup>38</sup> To my mind, the wording in the Vita of Macarius represents a conscious correction of the L-version. The Vita rejects the alternative of going to the right by providing a detailed explanation of the route on the left, coupled with a description of the dangers of the path to the right. The contrary explanation of the literary connection, namely, that the formulation of this group of Alexander romance manuscripts represents a riposte to the Vita, is in itself not impossible if one accepts the relatively early dating of the Vita and realizes that the dating of the  $\beta$ -recension is still very much sub judice.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, on a closer look this alternative must be dismissed. As has been noted repeatedly, the Vita in its description of fabulous beings and places draws upon material from, and is in a more general sense inspired by, the Alexander romance.<sup>40</sup> The original  $\beta$ -

recension is still free from the influence of Christian apocalyptic and hagiography,<sup>41</sup> and, crucially, nowhere does the L-version show an awareness of the central geographic argument of the Vita, namely, that the spring of water is on the left, while the right is but a barren desert with no potable water. The Vita thus provides a terminus ante quem of the sixth–seventh centuries for the existence of the special material in the L-version and, indirectly, for the  $\beta$ -recension as a whole.<sup>42</sup>

The presence of the Alexander tradition in the Vita of Macarius Romanus is of more than narrow philological value. To be sure, in the Vita there is no direct reference to the Alexander romance as a literary work, as is the case in another hagiographical text, an Ethiopic reworking of the famous apocryphon called the History of the Rechabites.<sup>43</sup> There a Palestinian hermit, Gerasimus, is inspired to seek the land of the blessed through his reading of “the book of King Alexander.”<sup>44</sup> But the Vita provides a powerful demonstration of the undiminished vitality, not to say relevance, of the image of Alexander as first created by the author of the romance, when it describes how the monks imitated and relived Alexander’s adventures in a Christian key. They followed in his footsteps, and had, in a richly symbolic fashion, the arch of Alexander as a guidepost in their piously intrepid, though ultimately unsuccessful, quest to reach the ends of the earth and the terrestrial paradise.

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pp. 30 ff. Unfortunately, in this last publication only the text of a portion of book III is edited; Bergson, *Rezension  $\beta$* , gives a summary collation of the  $\lambda$ -readings in his apparatus.

<sup>37</sup>H. Engelmänn, ed., *Der griechische Alexanderroman, Rezension  $\Gamma$* , Buch II (Meisenheim am Glan, 1963); for a characterization of its text-type, see Merkelbach and Trumpf, *Quellen*, 210.

<sup>38</sup>... προσέταξα δὲ πισθῆναι ἀψίδα ἐν τῷ τόπῳ ἐκείνῳ μεγίστην καὶ γράψαι διὰ γλυφίδος οὕτως. “οἱ βουλόμενοι εἰσελθεῖν ἐν τῇ μακάρων χώρᾳ, δεξιὰ πορεύεσθε, μήποτε ἀπόλησθε” (ed. Bergson, 201, lines 20–22 = ed. Meusel, 767, lines 21–24 = ed. van Thiel, 118, lines 36 ff). Manuscript C has the following derivative text: ὁ δὲ Ἀλέξανδρος ὑπέλαβε διὰ τῶν σημείων τούτων ἐκεῖσε εἶναι τὰ ἄκρα τῆς γῆς. ὥς δὲ ἔφθασεν εἰς τὴν ἀψίδα, ἣν ἐκτίσεν Ἀλέξανδρος, ἔγραψε πάλιν ἐν αὐτῇ οὕτω διὰ γλυφίδος· οἱ βουλόμενοι εἰσελθεῖν ἐν τῇ τῶν Μακάρων χώρᾳ, δεξιὰ πορεύεσθωσαν (ed. Engelmänn, 315, lines 16 ff). The word πάλιν is clearly an allusion to the fact the the building of the arch has already been mentioned once (II:39) in a form taken directly from the  $\epsilon$ -recension: ἐκεῖσε οὖν Ἀλέξανδρος... ἡγειρεν ἀψίδα ἐν ἣ πανστρατὶ διαβάς, ἄκρῳ θέλων γαίας καταλαβεῖν ὥς τῇ προνοίᾳ δόξειε (ed. Engelmänn, 304, lines 3 ff).

<sup>39</sup>The usual 5th–6th century date (see Bergson, *Rezension  $\beta$* , x) hinges on an incorrect dating of both the Armenian translation of Pseudo-Callisthenes and of the chronicle of Moses Khorenaci, which quotes from it; on this point, see my article “The Legend of Alexander the Great in Christian Oriental Literature,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, forthcoming.

<sup>40</sup>That the travelers’ encounter with Macarius has a specific connection with Alexander’s quest of ἡ χώρα τῶν μακάρων can hardly be denied. Cf. F. Pfister, *Kleine Schriften zum Alexanderroman* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1976), 139 and A. N. Veselovskij,

“Iz istorii romana i povesti,” *Sbornik otdelenija russkago jazyka i slovesnosti imperatorskoj akademii nauk* 40, no. 2 (1886), 305 ff.

<sup>41</sup>In two  $\beta$ -manuscripts, the story of Alexander’s gate is interpolated from the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius. Though the interpolation is also attested for the  $\lambda$ -manuscripts and ms. C of the  $\gamma$ -recension (see Bergson, *Rezension  $\beta$* , 205 ff), this is not the case for manuscript L itself.

<sup>42</sup>In one instance at least the Vita did influence the Alexander tradition; in a late Latin version, the so-called J<sup>3</sup> recension of the *Historia de preliis* (11th–12th cent.?), the interpolated account of Alexander’s arch (ed. K. Steffens, *Die Historia de preliis Alexandri Magni Rezension J<sup>3</sup>* [Meisenheim am Glan, 1975], chap. 107a, p. 160, lines 2 ff) clearly depends on the wording of the Latin translation of the Vita (PL 73, col. 418b).

<sup>43</sup>See J. H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, II (London, 1985), 443 ff.

<sup>44</sup>E. A. Wallis Budge, ed., *The Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great*, I (London, 1896), 360, line 14; for a translation, see vol. II, 562. Very interestingly, according to the narrative, Gerasimus passed on the book, which he got from his cellmate, to another monk (ed. Budge, 363, line 25). The Alexander book in question, however, may well have been the so-called Christian romance of Alexander (an original Ethiopic composition), which does provide an idyllic picture of life in the City of the Saints (ed. Budge, I, 289, lines 1 ff) rather than the Ethiopic version of Pseudo-Callisthenes itself.